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*The temporal Encouragement and
Reward of Charity:*



S E R M O N

A

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Preached in the

Parish Church of *Croydon* in *Surry*.

By the Appointment of

Dr. *William Barlowe*,

Some-time Bishop of *Lincoln*.

On *March* the 22d, 1752.

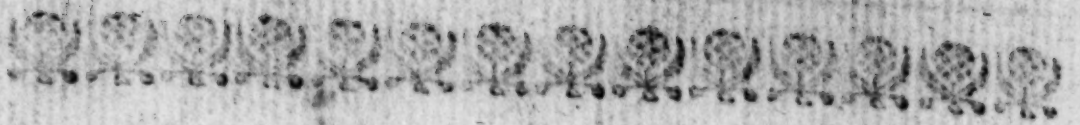


By NATHANIEL COLLIER, M.A.

Vicar of *Croydon*.

L O N D O N

Printed for *Lackyer Davis*, at *Lord Brouncker's*
in *Fleet-Street*, 1752.



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Parish Church of Graydon in Surrey.

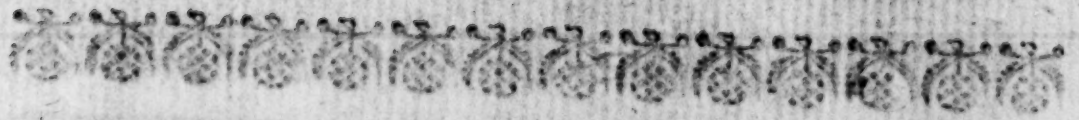
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Being the Day of the Anniversary Com-
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charitable Foundation of the Hospital at
Croydon.

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Printed for *Lockyer Davis*, at *Lord Bacon's-Head*,
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 PROVERBS XXVIII. ver. 27.

He that giveth unto the Poor shall not lack.

I Have made Choice of these Words, to lay before you the present and temporal Encouragement which they afford, to acts of Beneficence and Charity: the Duty which Bishop *Barlow*, the Founder of the present Exercise, intended should be explained and enforced from the Example of Archbishop *Whitgift*: chiefly because they are one out of many Sentences of Scripture, which our good Archibishop had himself prepared, and written out with his own Hand, as proper to be inscribed on the Front of his Hospital, founded in this Place: Well hoping, that every Stranger who should have Curiosity enough to look upon that noble Structure, the standing Memorial of his own charitable Mind; (being admonished, how little Reason there is to fear the Impoverishment of himself, even by very expensive Acts of Charity, when conducted by a prudent Hand) might be persuaded to go and do likewise.

The Topick of Charity is a Theme inexhaustible. And the Ways of doing it, like the Objects of it, are very numerous and extensive: Accordingly our Archibishop hath made a suitable Provision by the Instrument of his Foundation, for *such as are maimed,* B *poor,*

poor, needy or impotent, for their Sustentation and Relief; till Time shall cease: Limiting his Charity, where only it ought to be limited, to the most proper Objects. And we promise ourselves, that the present most Worthy Guardian of this Charity, will pay so just a Regard to the Design of the pious Founder, as for his Part to prevent all Occasion of Complaint, of its being misapplied or abused. Provided only, that the Persons from whose Hands he commonly receives the Recommendation of the Poor, be so good as to consider first; whom they recommend, and be careful that the most deserving Objects only; I mean the consciencious, the laborious and infirm Poor; such as appear to have some Sense of Religion, and some Regard to what is decent and *of good Report*; such as have not reduced themselves to Want by their Extravagance, Idleness or Debauchery; but have fallen to decay thro' Misfortune, Age, Sicknes, the Charges of a numerous Family, or other unavoidable Accidents issuing from the secret Springs of a wise Providence; obtain from them these recommendatory Testimonials; on which the best Men, where they must otherwise be Strangers to the Character of those who sue for their Favour, must depend; to enable them to make a proper Choice, to fill up such a charitable Foundation; agreeably to their own good Intentions, and the pious Design of the first Donor.

This is a Method, whereby every Person that recommends a proper Object of Charity, may in some Sense make himself a Sharer in the good Deeds and charitable Acts of other Men; and also in the Reward of 'em. Because, tho' he may not have wherewithal

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to give of his own Substance, in so ample a Manner as the Founders of Schools and Hospitals have done; yet he becomes an Instrument of turning their Bounty into the proper Channels in which they designed it should run; and makes their Benefactions prove of real Use and Benefit to the World, and to the Society to which they belong.

And indeed, unless Care be taken to make a Charity useful; unless Men have a suitable Regard to the Worthiness of the Object, Charity loses even its Name, as well as its Reward. For we may learn from St. Paul, that a Man may *bestow all his Goods to feed the Poor, and yet have no Charity*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

In order therefore to know, how to employ our Charity in such a Manner, as thereby to *do Good*; and to answer the Ends of God's Providence, in his Allotment of the different States and Conditions of Men in the World: in order to learn, by what Means we may best promote God's Honour in the Distribution of our Alms: pursue the Designs of his Providence; and make our good Deeds beneficial to Men; and so entitle ourselves to the Reward of *giving to the Poor*, Let us consider,

I. Who the Poor are, whom the Wise-man in my Text recommends, as the proper Objects of our Charity.

II. The Encouragement he therein gives us to abound in this excellent Grace. And

I. Let us consider, who the Poor are whom the Wise-man in my Text recommends, as the proper Objects of our Charity; when he tells us, that *He that giveth unto the Poor shall not lack*: i. e. shall never himself want that which he so gives. Now

Tho' it may be requisite that all, who are really poor and destitute of the Necessaries of Life, should be supplied and relieved out of the Abundance of others; by whatever Means they may have been reduced to Poverty: yet I conceive the Relief of the Poor is a Duty, more especially incumbent upon those of better Condition and Circumstances; when the poor have become such, either thro' unavoidable Misfortunes and calamitous Accidents, as they may have sprung from, and been directed by the secret Workings of Divine Providence; or by Reason of their Age and Sickness, or perhaps from the necessary Charge of educating and providing for a numerous Family; or other unhappy Occasions, not their Fault.

Such Poor as these seem best to deserve suitable Relief and Comfort: and these I look upon to be those Objects, whom *Solomon* recommends to our Charity; as they are doubtless the Poor, whom God has a special Regard to, and will reward us for relieving them: especially, if they behave themselves in their poor Estate in such a Manner as he has required; I mean with Humility, with Diligence and Honesty, with a Sense of God's Providence and quiet Submission to his Will; and endeavour to entitle themselves to his Favour, by a sincere Obedience to his Commands. And

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1. Those Poor are, as I conceive, the proper Objects of Charity; that are become poor by Misfortunes and Calamities, not of their own bringing, but of God's Allotment in the Course of his wise Providence. And indeed human Nature, with such as have not cast off Humanity, teaches them readily to relieve this Kind of Poor. The bare hearing of a very calamitous Case; as when Men have greatly suffered by Fire, or Shipwreck, or the Barbarity of Enemies and Villains, or other grievous Misfortunes; presently raises the Pity of all that have any Bowels of Compassion. We can't be easy in ourselves, till we do something towards their Relief and Assistance. The Unhappiness of the Case pleads for itself; and there is no need of Arguments, to urge Men to consider so pitiable, so miserable an Object. For we presently make such a Case our own, and think how hard it would be, were we ourselves by any such-like Accident brought into very great Distress, to have no Pity shewn us; and to be left destitute and helpless under it. Nature itself teaches us this Lesson of Charity and Compassion; and that in so strong a Manner, that we find it in many Cases very difficult to withstand the Sollicitations of it; tho' it has often been found to lead us into the misplaced Charity of relieving the most improper Objects: those I mean, who relying upon the Tenderneſs of human Nature, pass themselves for great Sufferers where they are not known; and invent lamentable Stories to raise Compassion in such as are Strangers to their Knavery and Baseness: nay, and who many times find their Account in the Cheat, so far as to obtain a Boon and an Alms, where

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if they had their Deserts, they would have been rewarded with a Rod and a Scourge.

However, the Possibility of being imposed upon, should not make us shut up our Bowels, from such as appear to be in great Want; and where there are reasonable Grounds of Belief: but having used proper Caution, it will become us to hearken to the Lesson of Compassion which Nature will teach us. And this we shall the rather be inclined to do, if we consider that God, for wise Reasons of his own, often leaves them thus exposed, and suffers them to fall into such Circumstances of Distress; perhaps to try their Patience and Faith, and Constancy. And then if we look upon them as *smitten by Him*, and such as *He hath wounded*; we cannot surely forget our own Demerits: we cannot forget, to whose undeserved Mercy and Goodness it is owing; that we have not ourselves fallen into the like or more grievous Calamities.

And as Charity is the only *Atonement*, an Atonement in a qualified Sense, that we can make for our Sins; this is the only Method we can take, besides our Repentance, to recommend ourselves to the Divine Compassion and Forbearance. And *He that giveth unto such afflicted and distressed Poor shall not lack*; shall be preserved by the merciful Providence of God, from falling under such Misfortunes, as to become the Object of other Mens Pity and Compassion.

2. Another sort of *Poor* to whom we are required to

to give, as proper Objects of our Charity, in the Sense of the Wise-man in the Text, are such as are become Poor, thro' Sicknes, or Age, and those other Weaknesses of Body or Mind, which are incident to human Nature. And the natural Reason, which recommends such Persons as these to our Charity and Relief, is; the being ourselves liable to the same Maladies. All of us draw nearer every Day than other to Old Age; and there are so many Pains, and Aches and Weaknesses, which attend that State, without the Load of any acute Distemper, to make it more grievous; that when we see Men already stooping under the Weight of their Years, it puts us in Mind of what we shall ourselves hereafter be; if some sharper Sicknes cut us not off before.

And therefore, as we hope for Comfort and Succour ourselves in that uncomfortable Time; methinks we should not slip the Opportunity we have in this calm Season of our younger Years, and Health, and Strength; to shew our Sense and Fellow-feeling of their Anxiety and Weakness, whom Age or Sicknes hath already overtaken. *Considering ourselves*, that it is one Day like to be our own Case; and that it is God's Goodness to us, that we are as yet free and at Ease: that the present Blessings of Health and Prosperity which we enjoy, may soon be turned, if a kind Providence do not prevent it, into Sorrow and Weakness and Misery. And this is the Ground of that Admonition of St. Paul to the Hebrews, Ch. xiii. ver. 3. *Remember them that are in Bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer Adversity, as being yourselves also in the Body; and consequently compassed*
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with Infirmity. I need not say, how great a Comfort the Reflexion on our having thus remember'd them, would afford us; if ever we should happen to fall into like Misfortunes: which was the Case of holy *Job*. For however he might complain, in the Bitterness of his Soul, of the Reproach and ill Treatment he met with in the Time of his Afflictions: yet was it no doubt a secret Spring of Satisfaction and Joy in his Mind, that he could with such Confidence profess his Sympathy with the afflicted, and Compassion for the Poor: *Did not I weep for him that was in Trouble? Was not my Soul grieved for the Poor?* That he could make that bold Appeal to God, concerning his Beneficence and Charity in the Days of his Prosperity; *I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet was I to the Lamé; I was a Father to the Poor.* The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the Widows Heart to sing for Joy, *Job xxix. 13, 15. and xxx. 25.*

Not was this his compassionate Disposition and Regard for the Poor, always forgotten: he found at last an ample Return to his Piety and Charity. And after he had been sufficiently tried, *the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, Job xlii. 10.* And *the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning, ver. 12.* That so we might not want the Proof of an experienc'd Example, as well as the Assurance given by the Wisdom of *Solomon*; that *He that giveth to the impotent, aged and helpless Poor shall not lack; but shall find a Friend of God, and shall himself want no Manner of Thing that is good.*

3. A third Sort of Poor, who seem to be peculiarly entitled to Help and Relief, whom therefore the wise Author of my Text may be supposed to have in View; are such Poor as may have been kept poor and low, by the Numerousness of their Charge, and the Insufficiency of even the most laborious Industry, to provide for a large Family of Children. Such an Occasion of Poverty as this cannot be disguised or concealed, nor yet feigned or counterfeited. For every one that knows, how many Mouths are to be fed by the Labour of one Man, can easily judge whether the Labour of one Man will bring in sufficient to feed so many Mouths. And if we see and know a Man's Wants; if we know that a Man does all that he can do; if we cannot reproach him with Idleness or Extravagance: it will be a very hard Matter for any one, *who has this World's Goods and seeth his Brother have need*, to find out a tolerable Excuse for *shutting up the Bowels of his Compassion from him*: as it must be a very improvident Saving to a Man himself; because he stops and dams up the Spring, from whence his own Plenty flows. Whence the Waters that have refreshed him will either stagnate, and become unfit for his own Use; or else will find themselves another Channel, where they may flow with Freedom, and spread their Streams to the enriching the neighbouring Lands. In either Case the Man's own Ground must at length become Barren and Unfruitful, for want of the Streams that used to refresh and enrich it. And in like Manner

The Man who thinks himself the sole Proprietor
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of what he possesseth, and from the Narrowness of his Mind confines those liberal Communications, made him by a bountiful Providence; to himself, or to his own, or to a few; to the Neglect of many, for whose Relief and Comfort those Communications were entrusted with him; forgets, how soon they may be removed by him that made them, and a better *Steward* appointed to distribute them. — I say a *Steward*, because none of us are strictly and properly Owners of what we have. We are only entrusted, to provide for the great Family whereof we are Members, in the Nature of *Stewards* who are accountable to their Lord and Master. Now it will greatly recommend both the Wisdom and the Faithfulness of a *Steward*, to distribute among *the Household* that *Portion of Meat* which is proper for them; and *in due Proportion* to their several Occasions. And if these be considered, such as are oppressed with a double Charge will certainly be remembered in the first Place, and have a double Portion allotted them. And he that being entrusted, shall execute his Charge with equal Diligence and Impartiality; may reasonably hope to have his Powers enlarged, from the gracious Disposition of his heavenly Lord and Master: for that *he that giveth to the most necessitous, laborious and indigent Poor shall not lack*; shall neither himself ever suffer Want, nor yet be destitute of Means and Abilities to administer to those who do. But

It will I think be a further Recommendation of each Kind of Poor before-mentioned, of the distressed and afflicted Poor, of the sick and aged Poor, of the

the necessitous and laborious Poor: if they are also

4. Those *Poor in Spirit*, upon whom our Lord pronounces a peculiar *Blessing*: if they be such as cultivate those Graces and Virtues, which become their Condition and entitle them to the Favour of God. I mean, if their Piety and Devotion towards God; if their Patience, Contentedness and holy Trust in his Goodness; if their Humility and Resignation to his Will; if their Heavenly-mindedness, and Looseness to the Things of this World; if their Industry, Frugality and Temperance with Regard to themselves; if their Honesty, and Meekness and Faithfulness with Regard to other Men; appear by their Behaviour and Deportment in the low Station they are in: they that are adorned with these Graces and Virtues, who are thus cloathed with *the Righteousness of the Saints*, being otherwise *destitute* and *afflicted*: these doubtless are *the Poor*, whom the Wise-man in my Text most especially recommends; these above all other *Poor* are entitled to our Charity. And whatever we *give* them, out of Regard to their Virtues, from a Sense of their Merits, in Consideration of their Sufferings, and out of Obedience to their Master and ours; who for a Trial of their Virtues has made them poor; will assuredly entitle us so far to the Protection and Favour of his good Providence, that we *shall never lack*. Whatever is bestowed on these virtuous and religious Poor shall not lose its Reward. And this brings me to the second general Head of this Discourse, which is

II. To consider in a few Words the Encouragement given in my Text, to continue and abound in the Exercise of Charity: *He that giveth unto the Poor shall not lack.*

I. The natural Sense of which Words is; that no Man will ever want that which he gives to the Poor, with a charitable Design to relieve them in their Distress. He need not fear, that he shall impoverish himself, by contributing of his good Things to them that want. And so the Words are an Argument, to take off that Distrust of God's Providence; which is apt to make us shut our Hands, when we should open them; and the Fear which Men may sometimes lie under, of reducing themselves to Want, if they were to give to those Objects of Charity that may offer; by assuring them of the Groundlessness of such a Fear or Distrust: for that this is the Means to secure the Favour and the Blessing of God; that he will make up to 'em all that they expend in charitable Works, and will watch over them and their Substance, and by his secret Influence make 'em flourish and increase the more: in one Word, that they shall not themselves be at length one Jot the poorer, for that which they shall *give to the Poor* and Needy.

And this is agreeable to the whole Tenor of the Scriptures, and the Purport of many Promises we therein find: which is yet further confirmed, by the actual Experience of King *David*, as he assures us, Psal. xxxvii. 25. *I have been young, saith he, and now am old; yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* And what he means by
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the righteous Man he explains in the next Words, he is ever merciful and lendeth. Where you may see, that the charitable Man is not only himself secure from Want; but his Children and Posterity after him: for it follows, and his Seed is blessed.

One would think I need not add; however to prevent Mistakes, it may be of Use to observe, that to make our Title sure to these and such-like Promises, we should

1. Regulate our Charity by the Measures of Prudence and Discretion: we are to be charitable, but not prodigal; we are to give according to our several Abilities, in such a Measure as our Revenues enable us, after having made a reasonable Provision for those who depend on us; and in Proportion to what we can spare: as the Sentence is worded in the Offertory before the Communion, *Be merciful after thy Power. If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy Diligence gladly to give of that little.* He that *hath Abundance* should give *Alms accordingly*; and *he that hath but a little, should not be afraid to give according to that little.* But he that *hath but a little*, if he be so unwise as to give in the same Proportion, as he that *hath Abundance*, will soon reap the Fruits of his Indiscretion, in the Diminution of his Substance. For he must not expect, that is, he cannot reasonably expect, that God should open for him the Stores of Heaven, whilst under the Pretence of Charity he seems to be feeding his Vanity. Especially because

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2. We are to exercise our Charity with Piety and Singleness of Heart, and with Purity of Intention to fulfil the Obligations God has laid us under, to the Performance of this Duty; and with an upright Design to *do good*, and to shew our Sense and Fellow-feeling of the Wants and Necessities of our Brethren, and to contribute what we can to their Comfort and Relief.

And this will exclude all mean and worldly Views, all base and sinister Ends, in the bestowing of our Charity: that we do *not sound a Trumpet before us*, or *give Alms to be seen of Men*: with a vain-glorious Heart *as the Hypocrites do*, to court Popularity; or to gratify our Vanity and Pride on the one Hand, or *grudgingly and as of necessity* on the other; only to avoid the Reproach of a miserly and uncharitable Mind, and to save our Credit among Men. For if such as these be the only Motives of our *giving to the poor*; I don't conceive they have any Claim to the promise of my Text, or that we can be any ways entitled to the Encouragement therein given, that *we shall not lack*: our Saviour having expressly told us, that if *we do our Alms to be seen of Men*, we can *have no Reward from our Father which is in Heaven*, Matt. vi. 1.

So that our Title to the temporal, as well as the eternal Reward of Charity, depends on the Purity of our Views and Design therein. And if these are good; if we give to the poor out of real Charity, out of Love to our Brethren, and in Obedience to

to God's Command, we shall not fail either of a present or future Reward.

Nor is the present Reward and Encouragement of which I am speaking, a bare Security from Want; which is the lowest Sense of the Words, *He that giveth unto the Poor shall not lack*: For I conceive this Promise and Assurance implies something more than this; viz.

2. That the abounding in Acts of Charity, is the likeliest Way to procure the especial Blessing of God upon our temporal Substance and Possessions, and to bring in a Return of great Plenty and Abundance. For this is undoubtedly the Purport of many other Texts of Scripture; and particularly of several Passages, that might be collected from the Author of my Text.* I shall mention but one from him, Prov. xi. 25. *The liberal Soul shall be made Fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself*. But the Prophet *Isaiah* speaks in the same strain, Is. lviii. 10, 11. *If thou draw out thy Soul to the Hungry, and satisfy the afflicted Soul, then — shall the Lord guide thee continually, and satisfy thy Soul in Drought, and make fat thy Bones: And thou shalt be like a watered Garden, and like a Spring of Water whose Waters fail not*. The Meaning of which figurative Expressions no doubt is this; that we shall never be in any Danger of exhausting our Sub-

* See Prov. xiv. 21. and Ch. xxii. 9. and Ch. xi. 31.

stance by Acts of Charity: Because as fast as we pour forth, so fast shall our Store, by the secret and hidden Conveyances of the Divine Providence, be constantly recruited. *For this Thing*, says the Law, Deut. xv. 10. *the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy Works, and in all that thou puttest thine Hand unto.*

The good Arch-bishop, whose Benefactions we are now commemorating, was a flagrant Example of the Truth of this God's gracious Promise; by the great Share that he had, in the temporal Blessing and reward of his Charity. Forasmuch as the Writer of his Life has told us,* "that he had been "heard divers Times to profess with great Comfort; that notwithstanding the Charge of the Purchase and Building of the School and Hospital founded amongst us "was not small unto him in Comparison "of his Estate (who neither impaired House-keeping "nor Retinue at that Time) yet when he had "finished and done that whole Work, he found "himself no worse in his Estate, than when he "first began: Which he therefore ascribed unto "the extraordinary Blessing and Goodness of "God."

And the Motto which he took from Solomon, to this Day standing over the Hospital-Gate, and which I therefore chose for my Text, *He that*

* *Paul's Life of Whitgift*, p. 110.

giveth unto the Poor shall not lack; may be deemed as his Acknowledgment register'd to Posterity of that God's great Blessing to him: And, if duely consider'd it will also, it is to be hoped, be of some Use to excite, as I at first observ'd, a noble Emulation of his good Deeds in other Men; when they remember the Testimony and Confession of one that had made the Experiment, in Confirmation of what the same wise King Solomon has further and more particularly assured us of, Prov. xix. 17. *He that hath Pity upon the Poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.* What we give in Alms and Charity is so pleasing unto God, that he reckons himself the charitable Man's Debtor; and looks upon his good Deeds with the same Regard as he did *the first Fruits* under the Law: Which being dedicated and offered up, to God, was the Means of drawing down a Blessing upon their whole Harvest.

But, then you must give me leave, because it is necessary, to observe; that as we Christians are concerned in the temporal Encouragement I have been speaking of, as thereby may be understood the Promise of great Plenty and Abundance; it must be interpreted in a qualified limited Sense: Forasmuch as all God's Promises of temporal Blessings will be made good to Christians, according to the Wisdom of his Goodness. They are not to be understood absolutely; but will be bestowed on us in such a Manner, as best to answer our spiritual and eternal Interest. If God

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shall see them fit for us; if he knows they will really prove a Blessing to us, he will reward our Charity to our poor Brethren with the temporal Blessings of this Life. But if he foresees, that such a present Reward would endanger our Virtue, or make us less solicitous to secure that eternal Reward which awaits us hereafter; the greatest Blessing he can in that Case bestow upon us, is to defer our Reward till the next Life, and to reserve a Blessing for us hereafter.

However this we may be sure of, that God will be no Man's Debtor: If out of Regard to his Command we deal out our *Bread to the Hungry*, and *Drink to the Thirsty*; if when we see the *Naked we cloath them*, and contribute our Relief to any other Persons in Distress; we are sure to be abundantly rewarded, either in this Life or the next, and possibly in both.

We shall meet even with a present Reward, so far as amply to make good the Promise of my Text: *If we give to the Poor with Piety and with Discretion, We shall not lack.* We shall never ourselves want what we so give. But if God should see it fit in his Wisdom, to defer the greater and more liberal Reward of our good Deeds till the next Life: If he sees it best for us to withhold the present Blessing of great Abundance, which he sometimes bestows upon charitable Men in this World; he will, however be sure to make us abundant Amends in

in our future State, *which is far better.* And
so

*An Entrance shall be ministred unto us abundantly
into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Sa-
viour Jesus Christ. To whom with the Father and
the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be
ascribed all Honour and Glory both now and for
evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.



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F I W I 2



